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TOURIST NEWS

MORE TOURISTS WANT ONLY THE VERY BEST

Switzerland's luxury hotels are increasing their share of the nation's tourism business, according to statistics just released by the Federal Bureau of Statistics in Berne. The figures show that overnight bookings at Swiss hotels charging less than Sw.Fr. 30 per person fell from 43.7 per cent of the national total in 1974 to 35.2 per cent in 1976 — even though most Swiss hotel prices have remained stable over the same period.

But hotels in the upper price category (more than Sw.Fr. 80 per person) increased their share from 6.7 per cent to 9.2 per cent. The luxury hotels also improved their share of overnight bookings from foreign visitors from 9.7 to 13.2 per cent — despite the increasingly unfavourable currency ex-

change rate for foreign tourists in Switzerland. With Swiss tourists, the luxury hotels improved their share of the market from 2.2 per cent to 3.4 per cent over the same period.

To meet the increasing demand for more comfort and luxury, some of Switzerland's five-star hotels have announced expansion projects costing millions of francs. The Grand Hotel Regina in Grindelwald, for example, is spending more than Sw.Fr. 3 million on nine new luxury apartments — due to open next winter — complete with kitchen, bar and living room and each with up to 700 square feet surface area.

Other hotels in the group which have announced extensive improvement projects include the du Rhône and de la Paix Hotels in Geneva.

SLIGHT DROP IN TOURIST BALANCE

In 1976 Switzerland's gross revenue from foreign tourists totalled 5,500 million francs, i.e. 120 million more than in 1975. However, this does not represent an increase in real terms; as a matter of fact, the change can be explained mainly by the new way of calculating tourist services in the overall figures. In real value, receipts showed a slight tendency to drop. Foreign demand too tended to fall slightly, owing to the persistent economic difficulties experienced by a number of countries and the increasingly high rate of appreciation of the Swiss franc.

Day trips and, in particular, turnover from frontier traffic decreased again. On the other hand, the revenue from the use of Swiss airplanes by foreigners increased. The gross expenditure on stays abroad by people residing in Switzerland rose again. It increased by 170 million or 6%, compared with 1975, to reach 3,040 million francs.

WITH STONE AND BROOM IN SWITZERLAND

The 1977/78 fixture list of the Swiss Curling Federation, which has its headquarters in Wildhaus, in the Toggenburg region, contains more than 700 tournaments. About 300 of the contests will take place in the 15 larger indoor curling rinks such as Arlesheim, near Basle, Berne, Biel, Grindelwald, Geneva, Lausanne, Thun and Wallisellen near Zürich. In Switzerland there are

more than 90 winter sports resorts and towns in which curling enthusiasts can indulge in their hobby. Various resorts are also offering curling weeks this winter. They include Davos (8th December to 12th March), Flims (8th January to 5th February and 5th to 12th March), Lenzerheide (8th January to 4th February) and Grindelwald (7th January to 4th February).

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Discover Switzerland's Towns

The "Swiss town train trip" arrangement makes it easy for tourists to take a look at some of Switzerland's many attractive towns this winter. They can choose from a list which includes Basle, Berne, Chur, Fribourg, Geneva, Interlaken, Lausanne, Lugano, Lucerne, St. Gall, Schaffhausen and Zürich. The arrangements cover one, two or three overnight stays, rail transport up to 81 miles, documentation, 24-hour pass for transport services, sightseeing tour and various other privileges. For the individual traveller, too, there are several schemes for re-discovering Swiss towns. Examples are the Chur Weekend Free Pass which also includes admission to three museums or the St. Gall inclusive arrangement which is available all the year round. Berne, the Swiss capital, offers its charms "à la carte" or the "See Berne — Discover Switzerland" arrangement, covering three nights in the capital and six nights in other Swiss towns. Winterthur proposes an "Art and

Culture" visit, with a pass for all museums, collections, galleries and castles while Zürich awaits the visitor with a whole range of extras. Basle has a two-nights arrangement plus admission to no less than 23 museums in the city; Lausanne beckons with an "Inclusive Weekend" offer and in Geneva the visitor has the choice of a "Genève comme vous l'aimez" offer or a keep-fit week. In Canton Ticino with its southern climate, winter arrangements are a major feature in Locarno and Lugano. The appropriate tourist offices will be pleased to supply more details.

NEW RAPID SERVICE

Swissair has become the first European airline to introduce "a speedy service" for small shipments from Europe to the United States.

A Swissair announcement said that

the new service — being launched under the name Swissair Parcel Express — would enable parcels to be transported from consignor to consignee "in around 30 hours".

A special feature of the new service is that it applies not only to cities served by major airports, but to more than 130 cities and their business areas in the east, midwest and west of the United States.

The Swissair announcement said the service was being launched in close co-operation with the Federal Express Corporation, a Memphis-based airline specialising exclusively in the transportation of small shipments.

Under the new service parcels are delivered to Zürich from receiving offices in Switzerland, West Germany, France, Austria, Italy and Britain, and then loaded on to the noon DC-10 flight to Boston.

In Boston they are immediately distributed by Federal Express to 75 airports, from where trucks deliver them to their destinations the following day.

A Swissair spokesman said the new service was particularly suited for urgent shipments of items such as documents, spare parts, samples and medical articles.



Mr. Otto Gerwer (Kuoni Berne district manager), Mr. Hanspeter Jenni (Kuoni Interlaken branch manager) and Mr. Fredy Mast (deputy director Bernese Oberland Tourist Office). Photo by Colin Farmer.

BERN BECKONS BRITISH

Britain is one of the main target areas of a new campaign by Kuoni, the Swiss tour operator, to attract more foreign tourists to the Bernese Oberland.

The company is this month launching a special winter programme devoted exclusively "to the region discovered by the British more than a century ago."

Said Kuoni's Berne district manager Mr. Otto Gerwer: "This launching of a special Bernese Oberland programme follows the company's highly successful experiment in operating a regional programme in Switzerland's Ticino region. If our Bernese Oberland winter venture is a success, we plan to introduce a summer programme as well."

"We are confident that our programme and prices will prove attractive to the British — despite the state of the pound."

"The Bernese Oberland wouldn't be the same without the British."



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Secretary: Miss N. Winterstein, Swiss Embassy, 16/18
Montague Place, London W1H 2BQ.
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Schweizerbund

President: Mr. V. Berti, 15D Cambridge Park, Twickenham,
TW1 2JE.
Tel. (Office) 01-606 4000

Secretary: Mr. J. Schmid, c/o Swiss National Tourist Office,
Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, London
W1V 3HG.
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Swiss Mercantile Society

President: Mr. F. O. Hausermann, "Wayside", 7 Scotts
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Tel. 01-636 2892

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Tel. 01-387 2173

Swiss Economic Council

Mr. R. M. Süss, c/o Buser & Co. Ltd., 19/21 Great Portland
Street, London W1N 5DB. Tel. 01-636 8806 and 580 7054.

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Swiss Youth Club of the Swiss Churches in London

The Rev. P. Jungi, 1 Womersley Road, London N8 9AE. Tel.
01-340 9740

Unione Ticinese

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Secretary: Mrs. M. Lyster, 33 Irving Road, London W14 0JT.

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Swiss Mothers' Group
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